



*the art of*  
**PERSONAL BRANDING PHOTOGRAPHY**



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## What makes a successful Personal Branding Photograph?

Nothing I'm going to say is the "whole truth and imho, a successful branding photo does 3 things;

### 1. (drum roll please) . It is visually arresting. Obviously!

You want your images to be visually magnetic. When I'm considering this for my clients I consider all the details of the image, the clothing, the setting, the props, the action of the client. We want an image that draws us in visually, that compels someone when they are scrolling through Facebook or Instagram.

### 2. It represents and adds credibility to the brand. What is happening in the photo tells us what this person has to offer and the quality of the image itself tells us something about the quality of the brand it represents.

Seems obvious, right? Part of this is and part is not. The quality of your images will represent the quality of your brand, be sure to work with a professional. That is pretty clear. The second part is where I see several coaches missing the mark. You want your images to directly reflect what it is that you are offering your clients and what their having worked with you will give them access to. A question I often ask my clients is "What do we want people to see that you have in these photos that their having worked with you will give them access to?" Is it self love, is it financial independence, is it freedom, is it a location independent business? What is it for you?

## MAKE IT YOUR OWN!

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If you are working at building your client base and being sustainable at 6 figures, I recommend that the majority of your photos focus on us getting to know you. We want to see professional, approachable, warm, capable. Include a couple stories that use the above info and focus on getting great connected "work with me" shots. Stay away from unrelated lifestyle shots for now until enough people get to know you and trust you or if what you are offering is specifically a lifestyle brand (Emily is a great example of that!) For example, if you are starting out and you are selling done for you VA systems, we want to see photos of you working on your laptop, talking on your phone, enjoying working, we also want clean, professional, connected photos of you. It is not the time to use photos of you buying flowers or shopping. It doesn't directly tell us what you offer and to start THAT is what we want. Once you have street cred and are easily sustaining multiple six figures and beyond, your clients may want to get to know more about you and then you can expand your repertoire of stories.

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## **What makes a successful Personal Branding Photograph? (con't)**

### **3. We feel like we are sharing a natural or genuine moment with the person in the photos.**

So assuming you nail the visual experience of your brand and that you create a visually arresting image, there is still a key part—creating the experience of feeling like we are sharing an authentic or genuine moment with our viewers. It's the difference between someone thinking, "Wow, I love what she is wearing" or "she looks so beautifully positioned," and saying "I feel connected to her, I like her and I want MORE of that connection. " That's the kind of recognition that compels someone to reach out and learn more about what you offer.

Most of us have many moments of feeling Smart, Connected, Vibrant, Powerful, Confident, Elegant, Playful, Capable, Approachable, Loving, Open, Vulnerable, Vivacious, Relaxed, Wealthy and Present in our lives. (Just to name a few of the requests I get from clients) so why do we so often struggle with conveying that when we are in front of the camera? For the majority of us how we genuinely, authentically feel is nervous, self-conscious and unsure of ourselves when we are being photographed (worried about how to position our bodies, concerned about how our clothes are fitting and if our hair looks ok, wondering if we should smile, where we should look, what the hell do we do with our arms?!? Can you relate??)

I personally think that the majority of us have two things making it hard to feel absolutely alive, happy and elated when we are being photographed. The first is a deep seeded shame about our bodies that goes way back to Eve and has become an unconscious part of our belief system for millenia. So there is that. Today, I see this play out in most of us by having a particular body part or feature that we don't believe is photogenic and then having an internal self-bashing every time we see that thing. Can you think of anything personally that is "wrong" with the way you look? The way I've come to make incremental change with this is to practice something called appreciative looking.

## **APPRECIATIVE LOOKING EXERCISE (OR HOW TO START LIKING YOURSELF IN PHOTOS)**

I developed this practice early on when I had clients tell me they didn't think they were photogenic or they tore apart something about the way they looked in their photos. The practice is simple but not easy.

Find some time to look at photos of yourself. Before you look decide that with each photo the first thing you are going to do when you look at yourself is find something you appreciate about the way you look. It can be something about the clothing you chose to wear, it can be something about your hair, it can be something like my ears are adorable. Start with one and keep going until you started to judge yourself then move onto the next photo and repeat.

Like so much of the Personal Development work we do this is just another way to transform our thinking and start operating in the world in a way that I think most of us want to be.

The second is that most of us had our first relationship to being photographed include some version of being told what to do that was counter to our actual experience. As well meaning as most of our parents were when they started telling us to smile as we were feeling sad or angry or confused or bored or something other than genuine happiness and joy. They wanted us to train us to look happy and instead trained us to naturally feel awkward and uncomfortable in front of the camera. Oops!

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## What makes a successful Personal Branding Photograph? (con't)

So how to handle this one? Well of course my first recommendation is to work with someone who can create an experience for you that is genuinely fun and elicits true joy. I also recommend allowing yourself not to believe you HAVE to smile. You can allow yourself to be present exactly as you are feeling in front of the camera and often this allowing will let moments of genuine joy come. Lastly, I think do your best during your photoshoot to notice when you are trying to look some way and bring your attention back into your body and into the moment. My favorite trick for coming back into my body is to wiggle my toes. Next be sure that from the get go you are making choices about what you are going to wear, where you are going to be photographed and what you are doing that are genuinely YOU! The you that shows up for success! This is a fun exercise to get at what that version of YOU is.

## CRAFTING YOUR "WORK WITH ME" PHOTO

When it comes to creating a work with me story, I lead my clients through this exercise. Imagine having an opportunity to work with or partner with someone who you are drop dead celebrity crushing on, someone who has global reach and is a tastemaker in their field. Someone who you admire and adore. Imagine Oprah, Richard Branson, Kirsten Stewart, Victoria Beckham, Ellen Degeneres, Michelle Obama, Kim Kardashian, Reese Witherspoon, Beyonce, Gabrielle Bernstein or whoever would have your jaw dropped in awe if they were to partner with you.

NOW, I want you to imagine that you have an opportunity to collaborate or partner with this person on a project. Their assistant calls and wants to set up a business pow-wow between you and them, any time and any place. It's all up to you—do you plan a lunch meeting at a chic 5-star hotel? Do you meet for a cup of tea in your home? Do you take them on a walk on the beach or in the woods? Do you have a creative sit down with them in a cool and hip private work space. Now, what do you wear to that meeting? What do you bring? How do you represent yourself and your brand with them? If you are going to go for a walk with Oprah, it's likely you are not going to wear your (wear them everyday because they are so comfy) lululemons and your old sneakers. You are going to up your walking in the woods game. If you are going to meet Reese Witherspoon for tea, you aren't going to go red carpet ready. If you are having a creative sit down with Victoria Beckham, you are naturally going to look your most polished, put together self and if for you that is a stylish pair of sneakers and your favorite jeans, go for it. No need to splurge on Loubotins if the last time you wore heels was high school graduation. Have it be uniquely fabulously YOU!

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"A THING THAT YOU SEE IN MY PICTURES  
IS THAT I WAS NOT AFRAID TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THESE PEOPLE."

*Annie Leibovitz*

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the “ABOUT” photo (aka the headshot)

Tightly cropped, eyes open, looking directly at the camera and can be easily adjusted to square, let the background communicate the vibe. I love having a few simple clean urban walls to use as backgrounds in my pocket.



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the approachable “Work with me” photo

We want to create an environment that the viewer can imagine sitting down our client and being welcomed to open up to them. I like to suggest that my client consider someone who they would want to be a spokesperson for their brand or someone of celebrity that they would want to partner with. With that person in mind, where would the ideal place be to meet with this person and what would you be doing? Use that as the inspiration for this shot.



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## the “I want what she’s having” Lifestyle photo

Lifestyle photos can do a few things. They can share a version of our client’s life that is attainable through working with them (time, \$, luxury, home, health). They give the viewer an opportunity to get to know the subject personally and share something “aspirational” about our clients life.

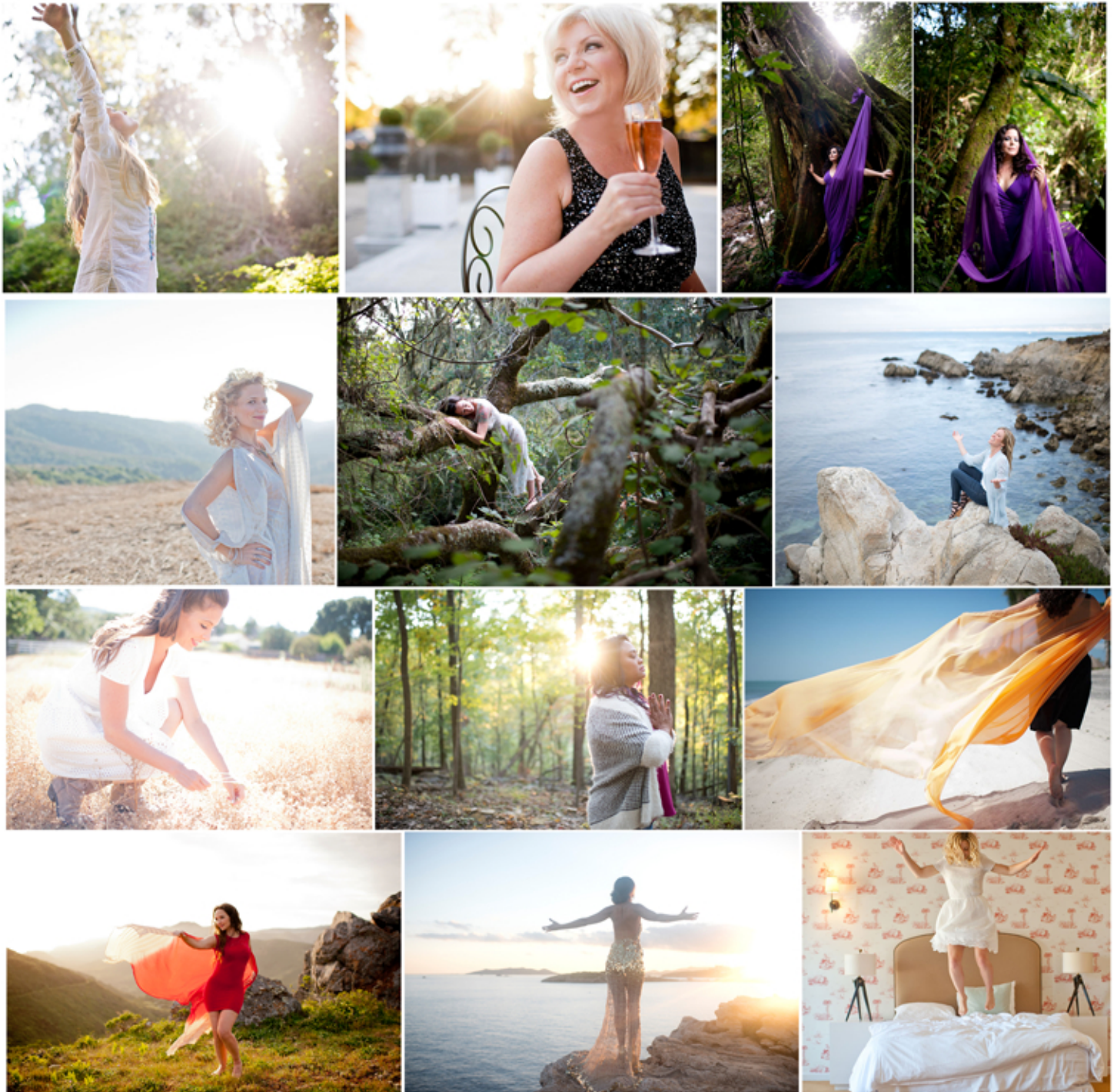




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the esoteric “Magical” photo

We want to create a feeling in the images that transcends what is actually happening in the photo. These are not necessarily realistic or telling a story as much as communicating a mood or a feeling and being visually compelling and unexpected.



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the "It's ALL in the details" photo

I rarely have the client look at my when capturing a detail shot and the depth of field is usually very shallow. Details make GREAT supporting photosh on websites and are a social media asset. Get creative with the details and try to incorporate a series of detail shots from 2 or 3 of your different set ups.



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## Laptop Shots

A variety of poses incorporating laptops!



Curious about booking a Personal Branding Photoshoot for yourself?  
We'd love to hear from you.  
Contact us today at [service@wendykyalom.com](mailto:service@wendykyalom.com) for details.

Find us on instagram at [@brandingphotographer](https://www.instagram.com/brandingphotographer)

You Rock.

xo  
